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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/724,710	12/02/2003	Teruaki Itoh	160-401	2219
23117	7590	05/18/2006	EXAMINER KUMAR, RAKESH	
NIXON & VANDERHYE, PC 901 NORTH GLEBE ROAD, 11TH FLOOR ARLINGTON, VA 22203			ART UNIT 3654	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 05/18/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/724,710

Applicant(s)

ITOH, TERUAKI

Examiner

Rakesh Kumar

Art Unit

3654

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12/02/2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 02 December 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference character(s) not mentioned in the description: Reference member 32 as shown in applicants drawings is not disclosed in the specifications. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d), or amendment to the specification to add the reference character(s) in the description in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(b) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

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invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yuyama et al. (U.S. Patent 6,138,868) in view of Portyansky (U.S. Patent Number 4,567,997).

4. Referring to claim 1. Yuyama discloses a feeding apparatus (Figure 1) to dispense tapered ampule vials (tip) comprising:

a tip (A) storing box (1; Figure 1) whose bottom has a tapered surface (1a) having a tip collecting position (7) in a lowermost part thereof to collect a plurality of dispensing tips (A) in one spot (Figure 2) through an insertion port;

a tip individually-sending mechanism (2) configured to lift up the dispensing tips (A), which are collected in the tip collecting position (bottom position of member 7 in Figure 1), one by one;

an outlet (5x) formed to discharge the dispensing tips (A), which are lifted up by the tip individually-sending mechanism (2), from the tip storing box (1);

and a tip carry-out mechanism (3; Figure 3) including a carry-out conveyor (26) to automatically carry the dispensing tips (A) and a tip stopping piece (slanted top portion of member 5, see Figure 5) which is projected-upwards to prevent the tips from rolling back into the holding storing box.

Yuyama does not disclose a door “turnably” supported to selectively release the tips to a conveyor and further wherein the tip holding section of the door mechanism includes a V-shaped groove.

Portyansky discloses a stick delivery mechanism (Figure 1) comprising;
a door mechanism (42; Figure 4) including a door which is turnably ("pivotally"; Col. 2 line 20) supported at a bottom end thereof to close the tip storing box (inside hopper) from outside (see Figure 4) and a tip holding section (44) which is provided on an inside of the door to horizontally hold one of the dispensing tips (28),

which are dropped from the tip holding section (44) when the door opens (42, pivots), out of the tip storing box (hopper) through the outlet (30), wherein the tip holding section of the door mechanism (42) includes a C-shaped groove (44) which is formed in the door (42) to insert a greater part (diameter of the tip) of one dispensing tip (28) end portion.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the teachings of Yuyama to include a means of holding tips in a groove disposed on the interior side of the door prior to selectively releasing the tip to a delivery conveyor by pivoting open the door mechanism as disclosed by the teaching of Portyansky because jamming of tips could be minimized as the tips are released to the conveyor mechanism.

It would have been further obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the teachings Yuyama in view of Portyansky and include V-shaped holding section groove in the interior door, instead of a C-shaped groove as disclosed by Portyansky, and such a selection would be well within the level of skill of an artisan.

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5. Regarding claim 2, Yuyama discloses the apparatus wherein the tip individually sending mechanism (2) includes a lifting plate which is driven up and down (see Figure 1) by a drive source, and the lifting plate (2) has a top end face (7) having a space enough (see width of plate as compared to diameter of member A) to place only one dispensing tip lying on a side thereof and a tapered surface (7) that descends toward an outside of the tip storing box (1).

6. Regarding claims 3 and 4, Yuyama includes all the claimed features but does not include a stopper disposed in the tip storing box.

However, Portyansky discloses a stopper (34; Figure 4 and 5) on the tapered surface (16) of the bottom, and the stopper (34) appropriately limits the number of dispensing tips (28) that slide on the tapered surface (16).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the teachings of Yuyama and include a stopper positioned on the tapered bottom surface of the tip storing box as taught by Portyansky because it would prevent jamming and allow tips to be carried by the individually sending mechanism (2) in each stroke, whereas an uncontrolled pile of tips can dismount the tips positioned on the movable platform thus, reducing efficiency of the apparatus.

Conclusion


7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rakesh Kumar whose telephone number is (517) 272-8314. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00AM - 4:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kathy Matecki can be reached on (571) 272-6951. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

RK
May 8, 2006


GENE O. CRAWFORD
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER